

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS

TOWN OF DARIEN

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EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
JANE BRANIGAN, PARK & REC COMM.
TOM BELL, HARBOR MASTER
CAPT. GARY PAVIA, POLICE DEPT.

Green's Ledge Light

Minutes of the February 1, 2012 Meeting

Present: Chairman McDonald, Vice Chairman Jewett, Commissioners Cavers, Huffard, Kemp, Raleigh, Sparkman, and Vilter, and Harbor Master Bell.

Absent: Commissioners Monroe, Schouder and Wallace.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman McDonald.

Chairman McDonald introduced and welcomed Bob Vilter as a new member of the Commission.

Commissioner Vilter noted that his interests in the marine environment are consistent with his interests in kayaking, which is a year-round hobby for him. All welcomed the new Commissioner and expressed appreciation that he had joined the Commission.

The minutes for the meetings of November 2, and December 7, 2011 were reviewed and approved.

Chairman's Report

Chairman McDonald reviewed the recent activities of the Citizens Advisory Council of the Long Island Sound Study (CAC/LIS) in preparing a letter to the Long Island Sound Congressional Caucus, and the subsequent letter from the caucus to the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Management and Budget. (Note that Darien is a member of the CAC/LIS). The letter from the caucus urges the funding of \$7 million for the restoration and protection of Long Island Sound in the President's FY 2013 Budget Request.

Chairman McDonald and Commissioner Cavers attended the CT Harbor Management Association meeting at their annual dinner, December 6, 2011. The meeting recapped the association's recommended priorities and action items that have been developed in an effort to get state support to enhance local management of CT's harbors.

Note – there was no report on the Connecticut Boating Advisory Council that had been scheduled for January 11, 2012 at the Norwalk Maritime Center, as that meeting was canceled. The next meeting is March 14 at the DEEP Boating Division's office in Old Lyme.

Harbor Master Report

Harbor Master Bell provided the current statistics for moorings. There are 284 approved moorings in all harbors, with a wait list of 73. Of these 73, 40 are wait-listed in the Darien Harbor, with 29 in Zieglers' Cove (The Zieglers Cove wait list is closed). Placements are estimated to be 10-to-15 for 2012.

Shellfish Report

Commissioner Raleigh provided a recap of his recent discussion with David Knauf, Director of Health, Town of Darien, who had attended the December meeting of the Commission. He summarized the results of the various testing stations along the coast that are maintained on a regular basis by the State. Samples from these locations are tested at one of the two State laboratories, and he surmised that it is not likely that they will allow other testing (by Darien's Health Department) for these procedures. Commissioner Raleigh also recapped the town's policy of inspecting septic fields: new construction and significant renovations. He noted that other than these opportunities, there is no provision for regular town inspections.

It was noted that at the December meeting of the Commission the following request had been made: (as extracted from the December minutes):

The Commission requested that the Town's Department of Health prepare a request to the State Department of Aquaculture to 1) approve the Town's procedures for testing the water quality in an effort to re-open the Scott Cove shellfish beds, and 2) failing this effort, the Department of Health will request that the State return to test the Scott Cove area, with a view to having it reopened for recreational shellfishing. A copy of this correspondence will be provided to the Chair of this Commission.

Commissioner Raleigh said that he would follow up with David Knauf in regard to this request.

Fairfield County Commodores Association

Chairman McDonald reported that the Association was looking into the systems and procedures necessary to meet the DEEP's requirements for capture and disposal of the waste-water resulting from pressure-washing boat bottoms when on land. The purpose of this effort is to comply with the requirements while at the same time proceeding in an economical manner – via the provision of a system for containing the waste water and performing the washing by local personnel, rather than contractors. As further information on this is available it will be distributed to interested parties. The harbor management priorities and action items for the Association in 2012 were also distributed.

Harbor Channel – soundings survey plans

First Selectman Jayme Stevenson has approved the contract with Coastline Consulting & Development, LLC for a hydrographic conditions survey of the Darien Harbor Channel. This survey will permit the preparation of an estimate of the volume of dredging necessary to restore the channel to the depth of the prior maintenance dredging of 2001. The scope and background of this project was described in a letter to the Selectmen from this Commission. As a result, the Selectmen included an appropriation for this effort within the current year's budget. (A copy of this letter is attached for reference)

The work is scheduled to take place, weather permitting, within the first two weeks of February.

Chairman McDonald requested that Commissioners Jewett and Kemp serve as the back-up contact for the contractor's representative: Mark Jackson (President, Coastline Consulting & Development, LLC).

It was noted that the survey will be conducted in concert with a similar project being conducted by Coastline for the Noroton Yacht Club.. It was noted that any coordination between the two studies would not have any effect on the survey being performed for the Town of Darien, other than the fact that the reported results would be in a similar format, useful in tracking the degree to which the harbor was silting in. The advantages of having the Darien Boat Club conduct a study in a similar manner was also discussed. This discussion concerned the depth of water around the Darien boat launch and whether a survey should be made in that area of general interest to the Boat Club. Commissioner Jewett was asked to communicate with the Darien Boat Club on their thoughts about this opportunity to have the survey extended to occur in the area for which they have an interest.

Mooring Specifications

Commissioner Huffard presented the final version of the mooring recommendations, suggesting that there were no substantive changes from what the commission reviewed at the December meeting. He stated that Jeff Eng was in agreement with all of its provisions. After a brief discussion, the specifications were approved

unanimously. The Harbor Master will present this material to the Board of Selectmen as a report from this Commission with his approval.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

The next meeting of the Commission, scheduled for Wednesday, March 7, 2012, will only be held if matters requiring timely consideration are brought to the attention of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman. If there are none, a notice of cancellation will be circulated and posted.

Notwithstanding the occurrence of the March 7th meeting, the next scheduled meeting of the Commission will be at 7:30pm, Wednesday April 4, 2012 in room 213, Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank B. Kemp, Clerk

Attachments:

Letter to Selectmen 12/21/10 describing need for harbor survey, requesting funding for the project

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To: Dave Campbell, First Selectman- (revised letter)
Cc: Karl Kilduff, Town Administrator

December 21, 2010

Dear Dave,

At our meeting with you, November 17, among the coastal waters issues we discussed was the importance of future re-dredging of the Darien Harbor channel. You asked us for an estimate of the first step, which is the cost of obtaining a permit, and the project's scope for a five-year plan for the Town that you are preparing. This letter is in response to your request.

Darien last dredged the harbor channel in 2001 to 8 ft. MLW. This was necessary in order to keep the harbor operational and safe for the boaters of Darien and their visitors in all stages of the tide and in all kinds of weather. Darien's main harbor is the center of our boating activity and is the home for over 500 boats of all kinds. It is also an exposed harbor open to direct storm influences that create safety concerns due to winds and waves. At this point, an informal survey by our commission indicates that there has been about two feet of silting bringing the depth to about 6 ft MLW. There have been some complaints of groundings at low tide with a sea running. It is clear that that we will have to re-dredge, probably within 5 years in order to keep our harbor viable and safe.

The first steps in such a project are to do a professional survey of the depths and then compute a rough estimate of the dredging needs in terms of cubic yards removed. The next steps will be the development of dredging plans, and the applications for maintenance dredging permits from the CT/DEP and the Army Corps of Engineers. This will require a number of things such as a negotiated number of core samples, lab analysis's, and negotiations on disposal sites. After permit approvals, bids will be requested from dredging companies. In 2001, the Town hired a marine consultant, Mark Jackson of Coastline Consulting in Madison, CT who, as project manager, was excellent in coordinating this complex project including the dredging stage, on budget and on time.

To prepare this estimate, I contacted Mr. Jackson, President of Coastline Consulting, who sent me a letter dated November 30, 2010 (enclosed) outlining the six steps to permits including costs for each step. We estimate the cost for the full project, including the first steps, at \$20,000. This is based on Coastline's six steps of \$10,889, plus \$5,475 estimated other costs that Darien will be paying, totaling \$16,364. Darien pays the costs of permits and the laboratory costs of testing and the core analyses. These are not hard figures until negotiations with the CT/DEP and Army are completed, and fees determined which have been escalating. \$20,000 is our best estimate of the total future costs to obtain permits.

Final dredging costs beyond the permitting cost are estimated at \$200,000 or more, depending upon the scope in cubic yards of the project, which will be refined into plans during the permitting stage. In 2001, the Commission successfully formed a public/private partnership to fund this portion of the project.

Since few grounding incidents have occurred so far, it is probably too early to officially start a full dredging project. However, we think a survey should be budgeted and done in the next year to provide a basis for planning. The cost of the first steps, "Hydrographic Conditions Survey" and "Applications Drawings" to allow realistic planning is \$5,300, developed from Coastline's letter. We propose that these should be conducted in the fall of 2011.

Please let me know if there are any questions. Thank you and the Board of Selectmen for supporting safe boating in Darien.

Sandy McDonald
Sandy McDonald, Chairman